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HEALTH FEST 2021

**Innovative approach
to conduct Community Service Learning**

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Given the prolonged movement restrictions which have led to sudden lifestyle changes and rising mental health concerns, innovative health promotion approaches are inevitable. As an effort to safeguard the community health and well-being while ensuring the Community Service Learning (CSL) could be pursued during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Public Health Medicine, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), has conducted a virtual 'Health Fest UiTM 2021' from 28th July to 8th August 2021.

This community activity is part of the Service-Learning Malaysia-University for Society (SULAM) initiative that aims to provide students with the opportunity to contribute their knowledge, skills, and competencies in their specialized area toward solving problems within the community. Four different themes were selected to address the issues raised by the local community during the pandemic - COVID-19 immunization, mental health awareness, physical activity, and healthy eating, and domestic violence.

The event was conducted through various social networking sites such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Curious Cat, etc. The main objective of this health promotion program is to empower the community about health-related issues by sharing information through innovative educational materials consisting of infographic posters, videos, games, and online quizzes. In addition, the program also acts as a platform for medical students to improve their teamwork, professionalism, and leadership skills.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the integration of digital technology into the delivery of effective service-learning in providing access to health education and promotion. A substantial majority (>80%) of the community members were highly satisfied with the program and applauded the organizers for conducting the health education sessions and providing accessible education materials covering important health issues.

In addition, more than 85% of students felt that the program enhances their professional development, which may be geared towards improving their critical thinking, communication skills, teamwork, and leadership skill. The 10-day program receiving good engagement and positive responses from the community has motivated the educators and healthcare providers the potential of a virtual health promotion program among a technology-literate population in Malaysia. 📄



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